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ABSTRACT

An overview is provided of the activities and recommendations of Luzerne County Community College's (LCCC's) Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Excellence (COAE), which was formed to review recently published studies and reports on academic excellence in American higher education and to analyze the applicability to LCCC of the recommendations of the National Institute of Education's report, "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education." After section 1 provides introductory information on LCCC and the charge of the COAE, section 2 presents background on the educational reform movement; the division of the COAE into five study groups focusing on student involvement, high expectations, assessment and feedback, implications of the conditions of excellence, and external agencies; the charge and activities of the study groups; and LCCC's mission statement and institutional objectives. Section 3 offers an overview of the deliberations of the study groups and their recommendations for change. Section 4 analyzes the implications of the study groups' recommendations for LCCC; presents a proposal for the establishment of general education requirements; and offers an integrated series of 24 recommended academic excellence initiatives. Section 5 offers conclusions and suggests a plan for the implementation of the COAE's recommendations. (EJV)

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REPORT OF THE AD HOC

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

LUZERNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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OCTOBER, 1986

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I. FOREWORD

The Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Excellence (COAE) at Luzerne County Community College came into existence at the request of Thomas J. Moran, President of the college, in January of 1985. In expressing a concern of all working at the college for continued and expanded quality of programs and for academic excellence in all facets of instruction and study, Mr. Moran specifically charged this committee to review recently published studies and reports on academic excellence in American higher education. He further suggested that the COAE pay particular attention to Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education, the report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, chaired by Kenneth P. Mortimer, Executive Assistant to the President, Pennsylvania State University. This report has formed the basis for the COAE deliberations, and it is hereinafter referenced as the "Mortimer Report."

Luzerne County Community College (LCCC) continues to be a significant educational force for the people of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Since 1966, LCCC has had a profound impact on the lives and fortunes of the students who have benefited from its programs and services. From meager beginnings in cramped, leased quarters in downtown Wilkes-Barre and a first year enrollment of 833 students, the college has grown beyond all expectations. By Spring, 1974, LCCC had moved to its present, permanent campus location on 122 acres in Nanticoke, strategically placed geographically to be within convenient commuting distance for all people of the region. New facilities have

allowed the college to expand programs and services, while, at the same time, maintaining and improving standards and quality.

Luzerne County Community College strives to provide the opportunity for individuals to grow personally and academically within the range of their capabilities and interests, while also providing them with the preparation needed to pursue careers in many, varied jobs and professions, or to continue studies at levels above the associate degree. As of the Fall, 1985, LCCC had in excess of 6,000 people receiving the benefits of its programs and services.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The quality of American higher education has become the focal point for national concern. The gulf between societal expectations and societal realizations in higher education was emphasized in the beginning of this decade in a report by the, then, U.S. Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell. Commenting through a report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), Bell said that America was threatened by a "rising tide of mediocrity." "Imaginative innovations" and a "broad national effort" would be needed to lead to "deep and lasting change."

Many more reports have emerged, and these are referenced in the bibliography of this report. However, the COAE felt that the most significant one dealing with higher education came from the U.S. Department of Education's research arm, the National Institute of Education (NIE). The NIE document, which has been previously referenced as the "Mortimer Report," expressed many concerns. Among them were the following: 1) professional and vocational programs are elbowing liberal arts courses from the core of the academic curriculum; 2) the achievement of students on standardized tests is lower now than a quarter century ago; 3) students in American colleges and universities compare poorly with those in colleges and universities in other countries of the world in many educational fields. Because of these concerns and others, the "Mortimer Report" suggested that it was essential for colleges and universities to redirect efforts at crafting more feasible, effective means toward

achievement of educational outcomes. Also, great emphasis was placed on the involvement of students in the teaching/learning process. The "Mortimer Report" presented twenty-seven (27) recommendations for the improvement of undergraduate education in the United States.

In order to properly analyze the "Mortimer Report" and the relationships/applications of its recommendations to LCCC, the COAE was divided into five (5) study groups as follows:

Study Group #1 - STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
Mortimer Report recommendations 1 through 7

Samuel D. Joseph, Assistant Professor, Social Science (Chair)
Doris Andes, Associate Professor, Nursing
Arthur M. Saxe, Associate Professor, Mathematics
Dr. Ann M. Williams, Associate Professor, Psychology
Thomas P. Leary, Associate Dean, Admissions/Student Services
Dr. Barbara N. Price, Coordinator, Career Planning/Placement
Edward M. Garrity, Project Counselor, IDEA
Edward J. Heltzel, Professor, Mathematics

Study Group #2 - HIGH EXPECTATIONS
Mortimer Report recommendations 8 through 16

John R. Kelleher, Associate Professor, English (Chair)
Robert A. Janosov, Associate Professor, History
Kenneth A. Lewis, Professor, Physics
Lisa J. Rowley, Assistant Professor, Dental Hygiene
John H. Sammon, Director, Counseling/Academic Advising.
Patrick J. Santacroce, Executive Director, IDEA
Dr. Sheldon Spear, Professor, History
Sujanet Mason, Assistant Professor, Speech

Study Group #3 - ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK
Mortimer Report recommendations 17 through 20

Francis B. Hanify, Associate Professor, English and Education (Chair)
Ruth H. Donohue, Associate Professor, Counseling
Ann Isaacs, Associate Professor, Nursing
Fred D. Walters, Associate Professor, Library Science

Study Group #4 - IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONDITIONS OF EXCELLENCE
Mortimer Report recommendations 21 and 22

Dr. William D. Camp, Associate Dean, Academic Services (Chair)

Ruby J. Carmon, Assistant Professor, Physical Education
Sharon Hudacek, Assistant Director, Nursing
Dr. Byron E. Myers, Dean, Academic Services
Basil M. Senyk, Associate Professor, Business

Study Group #5 - EXTERNAL AGENCIES
Mortimer Report recommendations 23 through 27

Patrick J. Santacroce, Executive Director, IDEA (Chair)
John M. Beccaris, Dean, Institutional Development
John H. Sammon, Director, Counseling/Academic Advising
Robert A. Janosov, Associate Professor, History
Dr. Byron E. Myers, Dean, Academic Services

The titles for each study group correspond directly to the section titles used in the "Mortimer Report."

At the first meeting of the COAE, the membership of each study group was determined, primarily on the basis of interest of individual members in specific sections of the "Mortimer Report". Each study group was charged by the co-chairs to do the following with its section of the report:

1. Read the Mortimer Report in its entirety;
2. Outline the section of the report assigned;
3. Discuss the recommendations of the section assigned in detail;
4. Write reactions/positions regarding particular recommendations of value or interest;
5. Record any minority reactions/positions;
6. Make specific recommendations regarding LCCC.

It has become increasingly important for all institutions of higher education to establish vehicles and processes for self-study and self-evaluation in order to provide some assurance of quality and excellence in programs and services. It is of utmost importance that students receiving the benefits of these programs and services be adequately and sufficiently prepared to deal with the complex problems of an ever-changing society. Traditionally, higher education has

attempted to provide for quality control through various procedures and intra-institutional functions, including such things as academic audits, use of consultants, and membership//interaction with various accrediting agencies.

While all these procedures and functions are valuable, the Mortimer Report suggests that institutions must go beyond these. Mr. Moran, in charging the COAE, strongly suggested that attempts be made to look beyond the current procedures--to carefully examine LCCC's fiber, and to confirm quality and excellence where they exist, and to also make recommendations for change and/or improvement where needed and warranted.

The COAE was instructed to report on its findings in written form upon completion of its deliberations. No specific deadline or time constraints were placed on committee deliberations, but Mr. Moran did ask to be kept informed of progress. Dr. William D. Camp, Associate Dean, Academic Services, and Patrick J. Santacroce, Executive Director of LCCC's Institute for Developmental Educational Activities, were appointed co-chairpersons of the COAE. All of the members of the committee volunteered their services without compensation.

In accomplishing the six steps, each study group was asked to refer, as necessary, to the MISSION STATEMENT of the college:

> The mission of Luzerne County Community College is to serve as the public, two-year, comprehensive community college for residents of Luzerne County and surrounding areas. A variety of educational programs and support services is offered in an attempt to provide opportunity for persons to pursue an education consistent with their interests and capabilities and in light of educational and employment demands. The college is accountable for its

mission within the limitations of its physical and financial resources.

The study groups were also asked to reference, as necessary, the

OBJECTIVES of the college:

1. Make opportunity for quality higher education at low cost available to as many of the youth and adults of Luzerne County and surrounding areas as reasonably possible;

2. Serve students of a wide range of academic ability, both liberal-arts and sciences oriented and career oriented, full-time and part-time;

3. Offer a comprehensive educational program for those students planning to transfer, maintain, and develop articulation commitments with four-year institutions, and prepare, through a comprehensive education program, those students planning to go directly to employment;

4. Provide quality instruction in all its courses and curricula, through a variety of teaching approaches, with content and resource materials suited to the objectives of each course;

5. Offer a program of student services, including guidance and counseling, to help youth and adults of Luzerne County and surrounding areas realize their full intellectual, personal, and social growth potentials;

6. Provide life-long and continuing education programs of varying lengths designed to promote the development of individual skills, talents, and vocational interests toward the fulfillment of personal or occupational objectives;

7. Provide the opportunity for students to remove educational deficiencies;

8. Provide community leadership and service--bringing the forces of higher education to bear on community betterment and cultural enrichment;

9. Provide for a continuous review of educational and support services to meet existing and anticipated needs of the students, business, industry, and community.

The COAE co-chairs provided no other instructions to study groups because it was felt that too much structure would tend to limit exploration, investigation, and debate.

3. DELIBERATIONS OF STUDY GROUPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

All five study groups met separately on a regular basis from February, 1985 to December, 1985 (with the exceptions of the months of July and August, 1985). During this time, meetings of the committee of the whole were also held on a periodic basis to provide the opportunity for study groups to exchange views and information, and to provide the opportunity for the co-chairs to obtain feedback on study group progress. Notes of the meetings of both the study groups and the committee of the whole were kept, and copies were sent to all members of the COAE as a matter of course.

Each study group was encouraged to do its own action research regarding current practices, programs, and services and to provide supporting documentation with any recommendations. It should be understood, however, that more detailed data will be necessary as these recommendations are considered for implementation in a plan of action. More on this point will be discussed in the last section of this report, which deals with a suggested plan of action for implementation of the recommendations.

Rather than reproduce the actual wording of each of the recommendations of the "Mortimer Report" that correspond to the study group deliberations, it is suggested that the reader use a copy of the report as a reference with the COAE report. It is also suggested that the LCCC Periodic Review Report of November, 1985, which was prepared for the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, be used as a reference with the COAE report.

STUDY GROUP #1 investigated the section of the Mortimer Report dealing with STUDENT INVOLVEMENT (recommendations 1 through 7). The results of this study group's efforts are the following list of recommendations to be considered for LCCC:

a) Investigations into the determinations of course offerings by semester should be conducted in order to provide answers to the following questions:

   1. How many students are able to obtain first choices of courses?

   2. Do courses offered during any given semester reflect the needs of students for that semester?

   3. How many first-year students are being exposed only to part-time faculty?

b) A survey should be developed and conducted approximately four to five weeks into each semester to assess part-time, evening student course interests for the succeeding semester.

c) Because of the growing problems connected with unemployed and dislocated workers, a feasibility study should be undertaken regarding the offering of a comprehensive schedule of technical-career programs/courses in the evening.

d) A system or process should be developed that would encourage administration to join faculty and counselors in the student advisement program.

e) Surveys that would investigate the goals, ages, abilities, and learning styles of students should be conducted because of the changes occurring in the student population.

f) Explorations should be made regarding various teaching styles and approaches that would reflect the needs of a heterogeneous student population.

g) Attempts should be made to educate the instructional staff regarding ways in which teaching styles could be meshed with learning styles of students in order to maximize outcomes of the teaching/learning process.

h) The instructional evaluation process should be studied to determine ways of including the addressing of teaching styles in the process with the provision for an on-going tracking matrix for the purpose of inter-relating teaching styles and learning styles. This matrix might also include self-reports

from students prior to graduation, and the dissemination of already-existing research and study done by faculty regarding teaching/learning styles.

Study Group #1 also addressed the issue of "open admissions" because questions regarding it arose during deliberations. In examining the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 35.29A, the group determined that LCCC appears to be in compliance. However, since the terminology "regardless of educational deficiencies" appears in this section of Chapter 35, and since this terminology allows room for the admission of individuals to the college who may have no reasonable chance of academic success, and for whom attending college might require extraordinary support services beyond the scope of what the college is able to provide, the group also recommended the following:

i) Regular meetings with secondary school counselors should be held in order to provide a clear understanding of available college resources for students who may have extraordinary needs.

j) Some process or mechanism should be developed that will facilitate further discussion of the open admissions process as it relates to students with extraordinary needs in order to determine whether or not consideration should be given to including limiting or de-limiting factors in the open admissions process.

Study Group #1 also made the following recommendations on the use of part-time instructional staff and the creation of "communities" of professional staff in order to establish extra-classroom environments of learning:

k) The college should address the current practice of employing part-time faculty where full-time faculty may be more appropriate and effective. The utilization of staff fully committed to the students and the college should be an institutional priority. The initial results of action research regarding the current practice indicates some rather obvious needs for full-time staff.

l) Various department heads and administrative entities should be encouraged to establish study groups and advisory/discussion groups outside the classroom, but with definite academic/program orientations. These groups might be based upon themes like "ethics in business", or "professionalism in today's society", and they might be used to provide a sounding board or resource for other students and staff. Later, these same groups could become part of a meaningful community outreach activity.

STUDY GROUP #2 reviewed the section of the Mortimer Report dealing with HIGH EXPECTATIONS (recommendations 8 through 16). The outcomes of this group's deliberations form the basis for the following recommendations to be considered for LCCC:

a) A thorough study of individual academic departments should be conducted, the results of which would be the basis for the formulation of a statement of expectations regarding student outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, capacities, and skills students must develop prior to graduation.

b) After careful study and evaluation, the college should establish a core curriculum for all students in associate degree programs, whether they lead to the AA, AS, or AAS degrees.

c) The standing college Committee on Academic Affairs should investigate and recommend a specific means for ensuring that all students have or develop computer literacy.

d) The establishment of a core curriculum should be accompanied by an interlocking and integrating of various components of the core via some strategic interdisciplinary instructional approaches.

e) In concert with the establishment of a core curriculum and a strategic interdisciplinary instructional approach, a process of course revision/re-design should be undertaken to foster and require the development of student capacities of analysis, problem-solving, communication, and--to the extent possible in a two-year college--synthesis.

f) Where it is necessary to assure both competence in a particular career/occupational field and knowledge in the humanities, the length of the affected career program should be extended beyond the traditional two-year format in order that students not be shortchanged with respect to all important aspects of their education.

g) Endorsement is strongly given to a plan to initiate writing competency examinations for all students at the end of entry-level composition courses. If initiated, endorsement is also given to a one-credit research course that focuses on planning and writing the research paper; this course should be a requirement for all students seeking degrees at LCCC.

h) As a practical means of ensuring that students possess a "grasp of principles, methods, and knowledge that should have been acquired in formal course work and related experiences," and also possess "capacities of analysis, problem-solving, communication, and synthesis", it is recommended that all students be required to take a specific number of courses that include writing assignments in addition to objective tests. Students pursuing the AA or AS degrees should be required to take at least three (3) such courses (excluding ENG-101 and ENG-102); students pursuing AAS degrees should take at least two (2) such courses, excluding ENG-101 and 102. (Quotes from AACJC draft statement on the study of humanities in community, technical and junior colleges.)

i) The feasibility of employing twelve month personnel who would have thirty-five hour work weeks to fulfill the needs of the Developmental Studies Program is strongly recommended. The personnel would be educationally qualified and committed professionals who desire to work with under-prepared students. In order to provide for ease of instructional assignments within the program, the personnel should be equipped to teach and work in more than one academic discipline.

STUDY GROUP #3 reviewed the section of the Mortimer Report entitled ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK (recommendations 17 through 20), and made the following recommendations after its deliberations:

a) A process should be developed to provide all faculty with a working knowledge of methods of tests and measurements in order to assist them in achieving desired teaching/learning outcomes.

b) A systematic follow-up of all students who have completed developmental/remedial courses should be made available to all teaching faculty.

c) Consideration should be given to the development of departmental entrance and exit examinations to help determine the degree to which students are able to think and reason in a logical and analytical manner.

d) Faculty should be provided with time and compensation in order to develop departmental entrance and exit examinations.

e) Provisions should be made to evaluate the ability of students to write and analyze--with emphasis being placed on writing across the curriculum.

f) Assessment of faculty teaching effectiveness should be expanded to include the components of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and student evaluation.

g) An "Honors Program" should be developed to give exceptional students the opportunity to increase their depth and breath of knowledge in academic fields of interest.

h) Student opinion surveys should be conducted to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the quality of instruction at the college.

i) An analysis should be made of the effectiveness of testing instruments currently being administered at the college.

j) Incentives which currently exist for faculty improvement and development should be further enhanced by increased college funding for these activities.

STUDY GROUP #4 examined the section of the Mortimer Report dealing with IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONDITIONS OF EXCELLENCE (recommendations 21 and 22), and reported the following findings:

1) Excellence in teaching should be rewarded in hiring, promotion, and tenure activities.

2) Good teaching should be viewed as a passionate commitment.

3) Teachers must have a mastery of the subjects they teach, and they must have the ability to communicate the power of work and the value of learning.

4) Good teachers should have competencies in the following:

   a) student advising

   b) writing syllabi

   c) delivering lectures

   d) designing individualized learning experiences

   e) leading discussions

f) being able to determine who is learning, how much they are learning, and how they can be helped to learn more

Based upon the aforementioned, this study group recommended the following considerations for LCCC:

a) The college should make funds available for "self-improvement" of faculty members in the form of re-imbursement for graduate courses.

b) Professional seminars should be conducted on campus that would stimulate intellectual discussions and activities.

c) A series of in-service programs should be developed on the topics of teaching strategies, student advising techniques, and cognitive mapping.

d) Faculty members should be encouraged to use existing campus resources, such as the Programmed Study Center, as a means for assisting students with learning difficulties.

e) The college should establish an internship program for faculty so that they might become more involved in their fields of expertise. This program could include time spent by faculty with local businesses, hospitals, social service agencies, etc.

STUDY GROUP #5 investigated the section of the "Mortimer Report" covering EXTERNAL AGENCIES (recommendations 23 through 27). Based upon this investigation, the group offered the following:

a) The college should do all in its power to lessen the negative impact of external agency pressures, either in the form of funding or regulations/policies, or both, upon the teaching/learning process.

b) Appropriate administrative entities should be encouraged to seek funding support from external sources, public or private, which do not necessarily require the college to comply with unmanageable "red tape" requirements.

c) Planning should be initiated to reduce and, ultimately, eliminate the dependence on external funding sources for the day-to-day maintenance of needed college programs and services.

d) New programs or curricula should be carefully researched to be certain that accrediting agency requirements are not of such magnitude as to be counterproductive to the realization of desired teaching/learning outcomes.

In the interests of discovering the number, and impact of external agencies on the college, this study group also compiled a list of agencies, not necessarily all inclusive, with which the college has an established relationship. More than sixty (60) agencies are included on this list, and approximately twenty-five (25) college staff members are directly involved with the coordination efforts between the college and these agencies. More than half (58%) of the agencies, either by a regulatory function, funding support function, or both, have a direct impact on the maintenance of needed college programs and services.

The study group generally recommends, that serious consideration be given to developing strategies for the future which will reduce significantly the impact external agencies have on the college, as a whole. There is something of great value and utility in being able to be the determiner of one's own destiny. At this writing, the study group finds every indication that the college has some serious, external impediments to this goal.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COLLEGE

The COAE recognizes that LCCC students are typical of community college students in their diversity. They are from varied cultural and educational backgrounds--and their goals and objectives are equally varied and diverse. The committee further asserts that allowances need to be made for such diversity by recognizing prior learning experiences, differing needs and interests, and the existence of a variety of entry-level skills; and by acknowledging that outcomes may be achieved in many ways, including (but not limited to) the passing of examinations and courses.

At the same time, the Committee assumes that there is a need to preserve the practical aspects of higher education, as these aspects differ from just job training which tends to be limited and often narrow. Education must be broadening and open-ended; inherently useful and intrinsically good; elevating and intellectual. This assumption must cover the broad spectrum of learning, from the humanities, through the sciences, to mathematics and technology, and back again.

The college's current (and planned) programs reflect this broad spectrum, and they represent part of the college's effort to maintain its commitment to equal opportunity--by making such a range of programs available to the people of the Northeast region.

Regardless of program, however, the college certainly desires to maintain the highest standards of quality and excellence concerning student/learning outcomes. In this regard the COAE considers the following goals (or outcomes) for student learning to be attainable:

read with comprehension;
listen, speak, and write competently;
use reference materials, including indices, tables, graphs, maps, computer printouts, as well as the traditional print tools (encyclopedias, journals, periodicals, manuals, etc.);
develop skills and attitudes that foster independent study;
develop skills and attitudes that foster group participation;
develop skills and attitudes that foster understanding of complexities;
develop skills and attitudes that foster a valuing of creativity;
apply ethical principles to personal decisions;
discern bias, falsity, prejudice, and faulty reasoning;
reason logically, both inductively and deductively;
differentiate between similar and dissimilar ideas;
interpret qualitative and quantitative data;
acquire the appreciation of and skill in physical activities for maintenance of desirable levels of fitness throughout life.

In order to help achieve these goals, and in line with the mission and objectives of the college, the COAE recommends the establishment of the following GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS (CORE):

AA and AS Degrees

ENG-101, ENG-102, and SPE-125	*9 sem. hrs.*
HISTORY (any history course)	*3 sem. hrs.*
SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS	*9 sem. hrs.*
ELECTIVE (Soc. Sci., Science, Math or Computer Science)	*3 sem. hrs.*
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	*1 sem. hr.*
SOCIAL SCIENCE (other than history)	*3 sem. hrs.*
TOTAL	*28 sem. hrs.*

AAS Degree

COMMUNICATIONS (ENG-101, ENG-102 or SPE-125)	*6 sem. hrs.*
HUMANITIES or HISTORY ELECTIVE	*3 sem. hrs.*
SCIENCE	*3 sem. hrs.*
MATHEMATICS (math, computer, or competency exam)	*3 sem. hrs.*
SOCIAL SCIENCE (other than history)	*3 sem. hrs.*
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	*1 sem. hr.*
TOTAL	*19 sem. hrs.*

These requirements are presented as a consensus of the committee after consideration of all information and input from COAE Study Groups

(especially, Study Group #2), and from the various college departments and divisions.

In addition to the recommendation of the General Education Requirements, above, the COAE has also addressed the redundancy of the recommendations of the various Study Groups, as they appear in Section 3 of this report. Initially, all recommendations of all Study Groups were listed (as presented to the Committee of the whole) so that a clear understanding of the intent and purpose of the recommendations could be gained by everyone concerned.

Now, it is appropriate, in this Section of the report, by eliminating duplication/repetition of each set of Study Group recommendations, to arrive at one list of recommendations that can be utilized to define just what academic excellence initiatives should be addressed for Luzerne County Community College.

Specifically, then, the COAE makes the following recommendations regarding the academic excellence initiatives:

1) The college should establish general education requirements (core) for all students who wish to receive the associate degree.

2) The establishment of general education requirements should be accompanied by integrating the various components of these requirements with strategically planned interdisciplinary instructional approaches.

3) Academic departments/programs should be required to formulate statements of expectations regarding student outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, capacities, and skills students are expected to develop prior to completion of studies/graduation.

4) The General Education Requirements Committee (See Section V) should develop a specific plan for ensuring that all students develop computer literacy.

5) To the extent possible in a two-year college framework, academic departments should be required to revise/re-design courses of study in order to make them more responsive to the development of student capacities of analysis, problem-solving, communication, and synthesis.

6) Writing competency examinations should be initiated for all students at the end of entry-level composition courses.

7) A one-credit research course that focuses on planning and writing the research paper should be encouraged for all students seeking the associate degree.

8) All students should be required to take a specific number of courses that include writing assignments as a part of course content. Students pursuing the AA or AS degrees should take at least three (3) such courses, and student pursuing the AAS degree should take at least two (2) such courses (excluding ENG-101 and 102).

9) It is strongly recommended that twelve-month personnel who would have thirty-five hour work-weeks be employed to fulfill the needs of the Developmental Studies Program. In order to provide for ease of instructional assignments within the program, the personnel should be equipped to teach and work in more than one academic discipline and should be educationally qualified and committed to work with underprepared (disadvantaged) students.

10) A systematic follow-up of all students who have completed developmental/remedial courses should be made available to all teaching faculty.

11) An "Honors Program" should be developed to give exceptional students the opportunity to increase their depth and breadth of knowledge in academic fields of interest.

12) A faculty internship program should be developed to assist faculty in becoming more involved pragmatically in their fields of expertise. Such a program could include interaction and on-site time spent with business, industry, labor, etc.

13) The standing College Committee on Student Affairs should request that studies be conducted to find answers to the following:

    a) How many students are able to obtain first choices of courses during any given registration?

    b) To what extent do courses offered during any given semester reflect the program needs of students for that semester?

c) To what extent are first-year students being exposed to only part-time (adjunct) faculty?

d) To what extent are part-time, evening student interests being met with regard to course needs for succeeding semesters?

e) To what extent is there a comprehensive schedule of technical/career programs offered in the evening?

14) A planned series of in-service programs, workshops, and seminars should be developed to address faculty training needs in such areas as teaching strategies, student advising techniques, cognitive mapping, evaluation of the instructional process, etc.

15) A complete staff orientation program with emphasis on new employees, should be developed to inform and familiarize college staff members (at all levels) regarding mission, objectives, history, programs, key personnel, services, facilities, etc.

16) New programs/curricula should be carefully researched before adoption to be certain that regulatory or accrediting agency requirements are not counterproductive to the realization of desired teaching/learning outcomes.

17) The current process for the employment of part-time (adjunct) faculty should be reviewed to determine appropriateness and effectiveness of the process, and to ascertain on a case-by-case basis, whether or not full-time faculty should be employed.

18) Various department heads and administrative entities should be encouraged to establish study groups and advisory/discussion groups outside the classroom, but with definite academic/program themes, e.g. "ethics in business", "professionalism in today's society". These same groups could form the basis for a meaningful community outreach activity.

19) A strategic plan should be devised and implemented to reduce, over time, the college's dependence on grant funds that directly support the operation of standard (day-to-day) programs and services.

20) Future college master planning should consider some strategy for the effective use of the college's growing data-base (computer files); this strategy might include an index for users which provides information on what is available, where it is located, how it can be accessed, and what applications are appropriate.

21) A survey of the professional staff should be conducted to ascertain their reactions to the adequacy of off-campus facilities, instructional equipment, and support services.

22) Future college master planning should include the provision for the examination and review of the curricular development process.

23) Meetings among academic departments/programs and the counseling staff should be encouraged, and should be held on a regular, on-going basis.

24) Contractural requirements/regulations governing faculty load should be reviewed and investigated to determine the extent to which they meet both student and faculty needs.

For the purpose of understanding the implications of these recommendations for the college, the recommendations in this section need to be categorized. It should be understood, however, that categorization, does not imply a fragmentary process in terms of tasks to be assigned at the implementation stage. Everyone should recognize the need to make the implementation stage (academic excellence initiatives) a total institutional process, with cross-pollination/coordination encouraged and included.

Categorically, then, the recommendations presented in this section may be placed as follows:

INSTRUCTION/PROGRAMS - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 21

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT - 9, 10, 11, 12 14, 15., 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24

STUDENT SERVICES - 13, 23

FISCAL/FACILITIES - 19

It should be noted that placement in a category emphasizes where the COAE believes the focus for activity should exist. Translating

this emphasis into a workable (suggested) plan of action will be the *subject of the next section. While it* may now appear that little emphasis is placed on the student by category, in reality, all the emphasis is on the student. Improving student outcomes is at the heart of the suggested initiatives.

5. CONCLUSION/PLAN OF ACTION

The main purpose of the COAE was to identify areas for improving educational effectivenes at Luzerne County Community College. The Committee's main reference source was the NIE document "Involvement in Learning". By examining the College's programs and analyzing the NIE proposals for higher education, the COAE has made twenty-four (24) recommendations which it believes will promote academic excellence at the college. A key element in the COAE report is to make general education more relevant by requiring some general education courses for all students.

The Committee's General Education Requirements (CORE) would require students to select specific courses. This approach emphasizes ends rather than means, and concentrates on the learning goals (outcomes) that represent what the COAE has agreed are essential for each graduate. In suggesting the new General Education Requirements, the COAE engaged in important discussions about the skills, knowledge, and experiences essential for every graduate to possess. The General Education Requirements are intended to emphasize for each student the important human values, to prepare each student for responsible and effective citizenship, and to develop each student's ability to think critically.

Course content and structure would be evaluated in light of these requirements and goals, and, if necessary, be revised to foster their achievement. To assure that students achieve the desired goals, measurable learning outcomes need to be developed.

The COAE recognizes the distinction between a college degree and

an occupational certificate. The granting of a degree at the college should signify that a student has encountered certain experiences, reached certain accomplishments, and acquired certain appreciations. In the committee's opinion, a student should be granted a degree only when he or she has successfully completed courses the college's faculty has determined will lead to those desired ends.

The COAE was conscious of the need for faculty support for its recommendations. To insure that all college personnel has a part in the development of the recommendations, draft proposals were circulated to all faculty and administrators with specific requests for input. Lively discussions occurred at the department level, and "reaction papers" were submitted to the COAE. The committee felt it imperative that the entire faculty be cognizant of its deliberations and recommendations.

The Committee received twenty (20) responses from various individuals and/or departments and programs. The responses varied in length from one page to multiple pages and included both positive and negative reactions to the report content. Some responses represented serious concerns regarding the recommendations for the establishment of the General Education Requirements.

COAE members were receptive to all concerns expressed, and a number of modifications were made to the initial study group recommendations. These modifications include the recommendation for two sets of General Education Requirements, one for the AA and AS degrees, and one for the AAS degree.

COAE members have been nearly unanimous in agreeing that the committee's activities have made them more aware of other areas of the institution. Committee participants were highly motivated individuals with a strong committment to the college and its students. Given the amount of effort and time involved in the committee's activities, it seems appropriate to suggest a plan by which the COAE recommendations might be implemented.

The plan proposes the establishment of two new groups: the Presidential Commission on Academic Excellence and the General Education Requirements Committee (GERC). The Presidential Commission would coordinate the implementation of all the recommendations, and the GERC would provide specific input on projects and activities related to the general education requirements (CORE).

Other college units and groups (already existing and/or ad hoc) and the various academic departments and programs would interact, as needed, with the GERC to work toward the implementation of the General Education Requirements (CORE). The GERC would forward work done to the Commission, and it would be the responsibility of the Commission to interact/interface with the president, the college's long-range plan, and the college's governance system in the efforts to refine all the excellence initiatives. The Commission might also receive input, as needed, from all the various entities shown on the attached proposed Academic Excellence Initiatives Flow Chart, and Descriptors Definitions Sheet.

Where appropriate, the Commission would hold joint meetings with

various entities shown on the chart and/or designate specific members of the Commission to interact with various entities/groups for the purpose of aiding and supporting implementation of the initiatives. Considering the range and scope of the twenty-four recommendations, and in light of the many complexities involved with such a process, it is suggested that the Commission be authorized initially for a two year period, whereupon the president can then assess progress and either continue or dissolve the Commission, depending upon need and results.

Since the main thrust for the success of turning the COAE recommendations into initiatives rests primarily with the presidential commission, it is strongly suggested that the commission members be individuals strongly committed to carrying out the recommendations; in considering the appointments to the commission, the president should take into consideration such things as length of service to the institution, previous contributions to institutional advancement, demonstrated leadership qualities, and the willingness to commit time and effort to the activity. The parameters of the commission's work should be clearly defined by the president, with the lines of responsibility and reporting clearly drawn.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Commission should exercise great care to insure that the College's governance system, especially the College Senate, be directly involved in the process. The Commission must be careful not to short-circuit already existing communication/information flows, but rather to enhance/improve them in a facilitating way, as it works toward achieving the excellence initiatives.

In working toward the accomplishment of the initiatives, the college should provide for any needed budgetary support. While it is premature, at this writing, to accurately state the amount of support that will be needed, the president should, as part of the action connected with the authorization and appointment of the Commission, provide an avenue whereby needed budgetary support can be obtained. Much of the Commission's activities during the first year will be organizational and start-up. It is during this time that accurate judgements can be made about what support will be needed. It may be that the range and scope of the Commission's activities will be determined by the budgetary resources available, or the president may decide to specify an amount in authorizing the Commission.

In creating and charging the Commission, the president will be taking a significant action toward fulfilling, in greater measure, the mission of the college. In working through the process of implementing the initiatives, everyone will benefit. Students will be better prepared, staff will be challenged and renewed, and the region will be the beneficiary of a more vibrant educational entity.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Luzerne County Community College's Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Excellence worked from February 1985 to October 1986. The Committee involved many faculty and administrators, and the report has implications for almost every segment of the College. We wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of the faculty and staff who attended meetings, participated in discussions, served on sub-groups, wrote reactions to proposals and contributed recommendations. The time and effort they gave to the study was substantial, and their contributions were invaluable.

We wish to express our appreciation to Thomas J. Moran, President of Luzerne County Community College, for having the vision to initiate the COAE and for providing the support and resources necessary to conduct this collegewide study.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the members of the Committee on Academic Excellence for their dedication to this two-year project. There were numerous meetings, long and difficult discussions, complex issues, and a broad range of views. The committee members addressed the issues openly and honestly. Although there was sometimes no consensus about recommendations, the committee members worked together to develop a unified, comprehensive proposal. The Committee on Academic Excellence members were:

Samuel D. Joseph, Assistant Professor
Doris Andes, Associate Professor
Arthur M. Saxe, Associate Professor
Dr. Ann M. Williams, Associate Professor
Thomas P. Leary, Associate Dean, Admissions/Student Services
Dr. Barbara N. Price, Coordinator, Career Planning-Placement

Edward M. Garrity, Project Counselor
Edward J. Heltzel, Professor
John R. Kelleher, Associate Professor
Robert A. Janosov, Associate Professor
Kenneth A. Lewis, Professor
Lisa J. Rowley, Assistant Professor
John H. Sammon, Director, Counseling and Career Resources
Dr. Sheldon Spear, Professor
Sujanet Mason, Assistant Professor
Francis B. Hanify, Associate Professor
Ruth H. Donohue, Associate Professor
Ann Isaacs, Associate Professor
Fred D. Walters, Associate Professor
Ruby J. Carmon, Assistant Professor
Sharon Hudacek, Assistant Director
Dr. Byron E. Myers, Dean, Academic Services
Basil M. Senyk, Associate Professor
John M. Beccaris, Dean, Institutional Development

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Dr. William D. Camp
Patrick J. Santacroce
Co-Chairs, COAE
October, 1986

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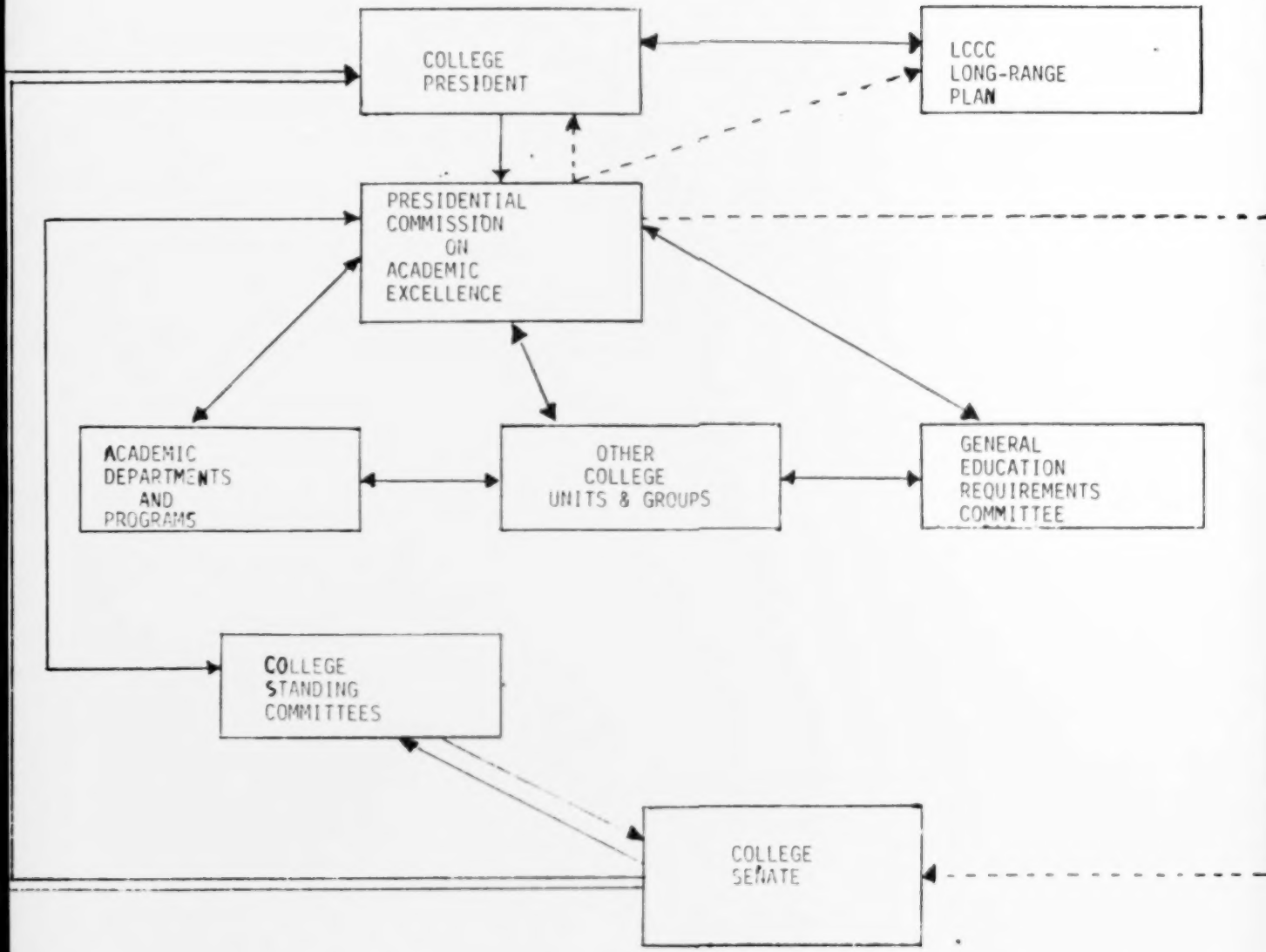
ATTACHMENTS

LCCC ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE INITIATIVES
FLOW CHART FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN OF ACTION



DEFINITION OF FLOW CHART DESCRIPTORS
LCCC ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE INITIATIVES

COLLEGE PRESIDENT - chief executive officer of the college.

LCCC LONG-RANGE PLAN - Goals, objectives, activities, and performance evaluation measures of the college over the next five to ten years.

PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE - a group of ten (10) to twelve (12) professional staff, including a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary, appointed by the President of the college to coordinate the activities connected with the implementation of the Plan of Action for the LCCC Academic Excellence Initiatives.

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAMS - those departments and programs at LCCC whose primary purpose is the delivery of instructional courses of study which result in the achievement of AA, AS, and AAS degrees or Certificates of Specialization; namely, Humanities, Science, Social Science-History, Business, Commercial Art, Computer Science, Dental Auxiliary, Dietetic, Emergency Medical Services, Health and Physical Education, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Mathematics, Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, Culinary Arts, Surgical Technology, Engineering Technology, Telecommunications, Tourism and Travel.

OTHER COLLEGE UNITS AND GROUPS - any college unit, organization, entity, or groups (formal or ad hoc) that shall be invited by the COAE (Commission) or the GERC to contribute or interact on appropriate LCCC academic excellence initiatives; specifically, the Student Services Division, the Continuing Education and Extension Division, and the Institutional Development Division shall be included. The Business Services Division shall be also involved, as needed, to adequately carry out the initiatives.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE - a group of six (6) to eight (8) professional staff, including a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary, appointed by the President of the college upon recommendation of the COAE (Commission) through the College Senate to implement the General Education Requirements in all AA, AS, and AAS degree programs/curricular, and to interact and provide input on projects and activities related to the LCCC Academic Excellence Initiatives.

COLLEGE STANDING COMMITTEES - those college standing committees currently included as part of the LCCC Governance System, namely, the Committee on Academic Affairs, the Committee on Student Affairs, and the Committee on Institutional Development.

COLLEGE SENATE - as defined in the LCCC Governance System of February 12, 1985 and as implemented on April 23, 1985.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

JUL 10 1987